

**Abstract**

This invention relates to diagnostic methods based upon a particular genotype in the Tumor Necrosis Factor (TNF $\alpha$ ) gene, more specifically, an adenine and guanine ("GA") at the 5 -308 site (or AA) rather than the GG at this locus. More specifically, this invention relates to a method for diagnosis of increased risk of death in patients with community-acquired pneumonia (CAP) and diagnosing pre-disposition or susceptibility to increased risk of death in patients who 10 develop CAP, by screening for the presence of this polymorphism. The invention also relates to compositions for screening for the polymorphism and improved treatment choices for patients having the polymorphism of the present invention.

The invention also relates to screening assays and 15 therapeutic and prophylactic methods.

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